

Do the Gods Marry?

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QUESTION: Some say that the Gods marry yet others say that they do not. What is the correct view?

ANSWER: The correct view is that which is in harmony with Truth. It is written in the Holy Scriptures of India that the Gods do marry and what is written in Scripture is true.

Even in Western Scriptures, such as the Christian and Jewish Bible, it is written that the Gods – referred to as the “sons of God” – married the daughters of Earth. Though some may find this difficult to understand, their inability to grasp such facts is due entirely to their ignorance of Spiritual realities.

Indeed, those who object to the notion of marriage between Divine beings are not true believers but mostly Westernised intellectuals and other ideologically and politically indoctrinated elements who are evidently far removed from the authentic teachings of the **True Faith (Sanatana Dharma)**. This is precisely the reason why they doubt Scripture.

Intellectuals are particularly prone to such errors because they are addicted to too much thinking which separates them from reality. This self-imposed separation from reality causes them to doubt reality itself.

The fact is that life is about living and not about thinking. Thinking is pointless and even detrimental unless it is done along the right lines, that is, in conformity with life. Life is truly known by living it and not by theorising about it in isolation of it. Those who have no direct knowledge of Spiritual facts cannot presume themselves fit to pass judgement on such matters.

Unity – the Essence of Life

What is essential to understand is that life is based on **Unity**. Marriage itself is admittedly a necessary and important form of Unity between two living Souls. As the Gods are even closer than man to the ideal and perfect state of Unity between Souls, we are entitled to expect them to practise some kind of Unity, which, in human language may be described as “marriage”. To say anything else would be both irrational and contrary to Spiritual fact.

According to the teachings of the Enlightened Masters, this Unity may be described as follows. The whole of Creation is but a Manifestation of the **Supreme Being (Parama Shiva)**. As such, it is carried out in three distinct stages or steps. The first step is that in which God's **Will to Create (Iccha-Shakti)** becomes active. In the second, God's **Power of Knowledge (Jnana-Shakti)** produces an image or blueprint of Creation. In the third, God's **Power of Action (Kriya-Shakti)** manifests the Universe as an external projection of His Own Mind.

In the first stage, there is **Absolute Unity or Non-difference (Abheda)** as God's Experience is one of Unity with Himself. In the second, some Difference comes into being as God outlines in His Mind the Image or Plan of Creation as something different from His Eternal and Changeless Self. Hence this stage is called **Difference in Unity (Bheda-Abheda)**. Finally, in the third stage, the actual manifestation of Creation brings about an experience of **Difference**.

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(Bheda) in which the objects that constitute the World are experienced as distinct and separate entities.

At the highest level of experience, therefore, God exists in a state of Absolute Unity where He is known as **Shiva**. In the Difference-in-Unity stage He is known as **Shiva-Shakti**, both "Male" and "Female". In the last stage He is known as **Shiva and Shakti** or **Ishvara and Ishvari**.

The above levels of Creation constitute the Heavens or the Spiritual World which is the abode of the Gods and represents the ideal model for the Physical World. Below this, there is the Physical World itself which is inhabited by man and other non-Divine beings.

The main difference between the higher and lower levels is this. The Radiant Beings of light (Devas or Gods) inhabiting the Heavens exist in a state of Pure Love and Unity with one another and with God. Human beings, on the other hand, who live in a World which is an imperfect image of Heaven, exist in a state of incomplete and imperfect love and unity with one another and God.

What is essential to retain, however, is that whether Gods or men, the life of all beings - from the highest to the lowest - may be described in terms of unity or absence thereof.

All human beings are, in a sense, one and this oneness is experienced by them at certain moments in their life. Indeed, all Souls were One before Creation and continue to be One as manifestation of the **One Supreme Being (Parama Shiva)**. At the same time, however, they are also distinct and separate from each other. And this distinctness and separateness gives rise to the desire to be one again. This is the true reason why humans form couples and marry.

As for the beings inhabiting the Spiritual World, like their human counterparts on Earth, those who inhabit the lower reaches of Heaven are "both two and one", that is, they experience unity but also difference between each other.

On the higher planes, as the Souls proceed higher and higher in their ascent to the One, the last vestiges of difference or duality are shed. In consequence, the emotional need for living as a couple is no longer felt and the Supreme Being is recognised as the True Soul Mate of all Souls. Unity with God, therefore, is the Ultimate Goal of all Souls, be they human or Divine.

The main difference is that, while unenlightened Souls experience difference between themselves and their loved ones, Gods and Enlightened Souls, even when enjoying life as a couple, see God in each other more and more until complete Unity with the Supreme is attained.

Therefore, marriage is possible not only on Earth but in the Other World too. A couple who was married on Earth may continue to be married even after death and those who die single may meet a soul mate in the afterlife. All this depends on Karma, Spiritual attainment and the Will of God.

This is a view that Yoga shares with all other faiths once their teachings are put in the right perspective. Thus, in an age-old tradition that was once common from Ancient Egypt to Europe and Asia, a married couple would remain together even after death and a wife could join her husband in the afterlife by laying down her life at her husband's funeral.

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According to the Quran, the righteous will go to Heaven where they will be "wedded to dark-eyed virgins". On the other hand, the Bible (Luke 20:34-35) states that on Earth, men "marry and are given in marriage, but they who have attained Heaven neither marry, nor are given in marriage, for they are equal to the Angels (or Radiant Ones of the Higher Heavens, in Yogic terms)".

Hinduism in turn teaches that upon attaining Enlightenment, a Soul simply merges into, and becomes One with, God. Those who have not yet attained full Enlightenment, on the other hand, may still marry both on Earth and in the Other World. The Great Epic of India, Mahabharata, for example states that warriors who die in battle are received by thousands of beautiful **Celestial Maidens (Apsaras)** eager to become their wives.

These apparently contradicting views are beautifully harmonised by Yoga with its teaching of various layers of Heaven, each of them being inhabited by Souls who have reached a different level or degree of Spiritual development: in the Lower Heaven, a Soul may still seek to form a close relationship with another Soul; in the Middle Heaven this is replaced by an ever-closer relationship with the Supreme; and in the Highest Heaven, Absolute Unity and Identity with The Supreme is attained.

Divine Marriage as an example to man

If the closer a Soul comes to God the less he feels the need to marry, why then do the Gods still marry? Firstly, as explained above, the highly evolved Spiritual Perception of the Gods enables them to see God in each other. Their marriage therefore must be regarded as different from that of humans the basic experience of which is one of difference rather than Unity.

Secondly, we must never forget that **the Gods are the Powers of the Supreme Being**. In consequence, we may naturally expect a particular form of the Power of Will, for example, to unite itself with a particular form of the Power of Knowledge or Action in order to perform a specific function in the Universe in accordance with Divine Will. In such a case, we are entitled to describe the Divine Powers or the Gods embodying such Powers, as being married, united, or joined to one another as required by the function or task in question.

Though the Gods may not need to marry out of some emotional, material or biological need, they may still marry to fulfill specific functions as required by life on the various planes of existence. Finally, the Gods are the ideal models all humans must follow in order to maintain Divine Order on Earth and ultimately elevate themselves to higher stages of experience.

In terms of human life, therefore, the Gods marry to demonstrate to man the paramount importance of the **Universal Principle of Unity (Yoga-Tattva)** and its practical application.

This World-Supporting Principle of Unity which gives rise to an experience of Pure and Perfect Love, Unity and Harmony between two Souls as well as between various Souls and God is exemplified by the Divine Entities, **Ishvara** and **Ishvari**, **Shiva** and **Shakti**, or **Shiva** and **Parvati** who are the Manifestations of the **Supreme Being, Parama Shiva Himself**.

Is Lord Shiva married?

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As Scripture declares, "all men are Shiva and all women are Shakti" (Shiva Purana). All humans are manifestations of Lord Shiva, and He lives in the heart of all men. Therefore, Lord Shiva Himself marries in and through all humans who marry.

In the final analysis, it is not humans who marry, for they are just empty and lifeless shells without Shiva, but Shiva Himself who does so through His human manifestations.

Moreover, as the Universal Soul and Supreme Soul Mate, Shiva is permanently "married" or united to all Souls and therefore qualifies as the Divine Husband of all Souls. This fact is reflected in the beliefs of traditional societies, where the Moon God, who is a manifestation of Shiva and determines women's menstrual cycle is said to be the husband of all women on account of his intimate connection with the female body.

More specifically, the Supreme Being may manifest or incarnate on Earth and other Planes of existence in order to marry or otherwise unite Himself with a particular Soul for a particular purpose. For example, when a Soul becomes Enlightened, he is embraced by Shiva's infinite and all-encompassing Heart in a permanent and intimate experience of Unity comparable to an ideal, Spiritual marriage between two Souls.

Also, as Scripture tells us, Lord Shiva married Parvati, the Mountain Maiden, at the request of the Gods in order to populate the Universe with Souls. In Divine terms, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati symbolises God's Union with His own Power ("Shakti" means "Power" in Sanskrit) for the purpose of creation and represents an accurate enough description of facts. In human terms, this Divine Marriage stands for the Union of man and God.

Thus, whichever way we look at it, Divine marriage must be admitted to be an incontrovertible Spiritual fact and an example for man to follow. Householders are married to a human being, yet they must see God in each other and are, ultimately, united in and to God. Likewise, those who are devoted to a life of Spirit are married to, or live a life in Unity with, God Himself. Whether man or God, every creature must abide by Shiva's Law of Unity. This is the Truth, the Highest Teaching and the Secret of all Marriage.
